DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 185 EA 011 463

AUTHOR Lamborn, Robert L.
TITLE The State Board's Role with Private Schools.
PUB DATE 14 Oct 78
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of State Boards of Education (16th, Hershey, Pennsylvania, October 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accreditation (Institutions); *Board of Education Role; Cooperative Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Government School Relationship; *Private Schools; Public Schools; *State Boards of Education; State Standards

ABSTRACT

A state board of education has several major responsibilities regarding private schools. It should have an understanding of the legal constraints regarding its relationship with private schools. It should have information about the character of private schools nationwide and in their state. Research is needed regarding how private schools affect the educational performance of all children, the performance of public schools, community satisfaction with schooling, and community stability. State boards should use this information to strive for well-integrated and well-articulated private school policies. The National Association of State Boards of Education and individual state boards must create a climate to encourage the collaborative use of public and private resources. Toward this end, private school people should be routinely invited to participate in the consideration of education issues, policies, and practices. State boards should coordinate such efforts and encourage private school participation. Regarding control of private schools, the state education agency has the responsibility to protect the public's health, safety, and morals. Accreditation requirements concerning other factors should be unrestrictive and offer wide choices. Technical support services should be offered for upgrading private schools, but the best test of worth of a private school must be its ability to attract and retain a clientele. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R.L. Lamborn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

"The State Board's Role with Private Schools"

[Introduction]

Robert L. Lamborn

I am delighted to be with you to consider the roll of the State Board with regard to private schools. The Directors of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE)--and I--are eager to work with you on the national and state levels, and on a continuing basis, to establish, to improve, to further strengthen, the on-going relationships between State Boards of Education and the private schools. We are quite convinced--because it is so potently so--that the public policy decisions which are of greatest significance to the welfare of private schools are those made at the state level, and that State Boards play vital roles in fashioning and implementing those decisions.

CAPE's Directors and I are committed, also, to the proposition that in a pluralistic society the public welfare is best served by strong public schools and strong private schools operating as complementary and mutually supportive public service agencies. This can only be the case where the relationships between the State Boards and private schools are thoughtfully structured and carefully nurtured.

At the outset, this afternoon, I should define one term and tell how I've approached this assignment. The definition: I'll be using "private" as synonomous with "nonpublic" covering all of the schools not operated under public auspices, both sectarian and nonsectarian. As for my approach to this afternoon's discussion, I've come at it not as a CAPE representative, but as a practicing school administrator who has spent a professional life time

ED168185

EA 011 463

working for all of our schools public and private. In this professional lifetime, my formal professional training has been in public education oriented programs, and my work has always kept me closely associated with public school people on all levels, often as a committee or commission member appointed by a state board of education. While my special competence lies with private schools, I am not here as a private school advocate but as a schoolman hoping to assist in finding better ways for state boards and private schools to pool their resources to benefit all of the schools--and the children they serve. So much for background and intent.

The role of any given state board of education with regard to private schools is constrained and mandated in varying ways by the federal constitution by the state constitution and by state law. While we might disagree on the exact nature of those constraints--and those mandates--we would surely agree they exist. I nod acknowledgement to them and pass on, intending that my recommendations are to be bounded and modified as necessary from state to state by those constraints and mandatory obligations. To best meet its obligations as a public agency, a state board of education has, in my judgement, these major responsibilities as they relate to private schools.

(1) It should have a clear understanding of the legal constraints and mandates under which it operates vis-a-vis the private schools. It needs to specifically and systematically search out, collate, and study this information and understand its operating implications.

(2) It should have sound information about the character and condition of the private schools nation wide--and in their state. I cannot provide such information on a state to state basis, but I can tell you something about private schools nationally.

There are approximately 20,000 private schools (18 percent of all schools), employing about 250,000 teachers (10 percent of all teachers), and enrolling about 5 million students (10 percent of all students). In major metropolitan centers, the percentages of all school-age children attending private schools regularly ranges from 20 to 25 to 30 percent. In a number of states the percentage approaches 20.

Nationally these schools generate--from tuitions, gifts, and other sources--about $8 billion annually for school operation and about $1 billion annually for capital expenditure for an annual total of about $9 billion. In effect, they provide from private sources about 10 percent of all funds expended annually for the American education enterprize (k-12)--and more than twice as much as is provided by the federal government. In the financially pressed major metropolitan areas, they generate proportionately higher percentages, roughly

paralleling the percentages of the students served.

It seems fair to estimate that over 95% of all students attending private schools do so in schools which are nonprofit--and support admissions policies which are nondiscriminatory on the basis of race. Of all private school students, 64 percent come from families with gross annual incomes of $20,000 or less, many of much less. Broadly speaking, 70 percent attend Catholic schools; 23 percent, Protestant; 2 percent, Hebrew; and 5 percent, nonsectarian schools.

These are national figures. They are good to have in mind. State board members should have similar data for the private schools in their states. Beyond such demographic and descriptive data, we need to undertake research designed to throw light on the ways in which the presence of private schools in a community affects such matters as:

(1)the educational performance of all children within the community;

(2)the performance of public schools in the community;

(3)community satisfaction with available schooling opportunities within the community; and

(4)community stability.

I wrote Wes Apher the other day that I am most encouraged that there is evident support in NASBE for creating such fundamentally essential information. CAPE, Census, National Center for Education Statistics, National Institute of Education, Center for Research on Private Education, Associates for Research on Private Education (a special interest group in American Educational Research Association), and Educational Resources Information Center are at work to create such demographic descriptive and research information on a national level and to gather it in a national repository.

(3) With such information in hand, state board members should then strive to create well-intergrated and articulated public policy concerning private schools, and to implement that policy.

(4) In the absence of solid information suggesting a contrary course of action and in view of prevailing realities in both the public and private schools-- NASBE, nationally, and state boards individually, would be wise, I believe, to work to create a public and professional climate which would encourage the collaborative and efficient use of all availabel educational resources, public and private, to meet the nation's and their state's pressing educational problems.

(a) Private school people should be routinely invited to participate in the consideration of education issues and the implementation of policies and practices: establishing policy, drafting legislation, developing regulations, monitoring performances, designing programs for professional improvement, conducting research, developing curricular materials, and planning public relations strategies, for example. And they should always be involved when those issues, policies and procedures are directly related to the operation of private schools. Private schools are, after all, by their nature as private sector institutions, operating under marketplace forces different in nature from public schools and those forces need to be understood in addressing issues determining policy, and implementing practice.

(b) SEA personnel should be charged with the responsibility of coordinating efforts to assure such participation and to strive to see that the outcomes of that participation are constructive. There are a number of state

models for such activity which I will be happy to discuss during the question period if you should wish.

(c) Private school representatives should be encouraged to see the value of such collaboration and to become actively involved. You can say that is primarily a private school responsibility and of course you are right--still state boards can nurture such collaboration. For its part, accepting its primary responsibility in this effort, CAPE has been actively promoting collaborative efforts of exactly this sort among private school people, most publically at the Second National OE-CAPE Conference last December which addressed this issue specifically.

Let me turn finally to the difficult matters related to the public control of private schools. Here I am speaking entirely for myself, without benefit of specific extended discussion of the subject by CAPE's Directors. Private school leaders vary considerably in their judgement as to the proper role of government in the operation of private schools. So, of course, do those in government and in public school administration. The current levels of involvement range from none, through registration, approval, and accreditation, to rather considerable control. I believe that, at the very least, the state education agency should know that a private school exists, the grades encompassed, the general character of

educational programs, and the number of students enrolled. It has the responsibility to protect the public's health, safety, and morals. This requires registration and minimum annual reports. Beyond that sound policy must recognize how little we know about what is specifically required to operate an effective school--to be an effective teacher. Schools should be offered the opportunity to be "approved" and, by one method or another, "accredited". Requirements should be as wide and as unrestrictive as possible. With an eye to upgrading the schools, technical support services should be offered in as many areas of school operation as possible, preferably in all areas and in the same manner as to public schools, but control should be exercised on as limited a basis as possible. The minimum performance standards established for private schools should at most be no more demanding than those in effect in the public schools.

A dual standard requiring more of private schools than the lease of the public schools is inconscienceable. As they have since colonial times, private schools operate under marketplace conditions, and their ultimate test should be their performance to attract and retain a clientele. The public must be protected from the unsafe, the unhealthy, the immoral. People can, within these broad boundries, be counted upon to protect themselves from shoddy programs. Particularly when the public school is available, free, as a next door option.

In summary: Private schools educate approximately 10 percent of all American school children. Private sources generate 10 percent of the funds required to educate American school children , and all those responsible at the state level for the quality of American education, including its financing, should recognize that this is so and search for the most effective ways to assure that public and private schools operate as complementary public service institutions serving the public need.

NASBE has announced a commitment to lead the effort to improve the quality of education in our democratic society and to encourage cooperation to that end, among state boards of education and all other boards, agencies, and organizations concerned with education. CAPE and its Directors are eager to cooperate in that effort.